OPINIONS

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TECHNIQUE
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Quote of the week:
"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
—Thomas Alva Edison

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Tracking the trolley

The introduction of the Tech Trolley last semester was apparently only the beginning of a massive introduction of technological wonders to the world of mass transit on Ferst Drive. With the addition of global positioning systems (GPS) to the trolleys, students can now log onto a website to find out the real-time location of any of the trolleys. Although this is a fitting technological advance to be featured at a school like Tech, it might be a little ahead of its time, with little functionality and practicality in our current setting.

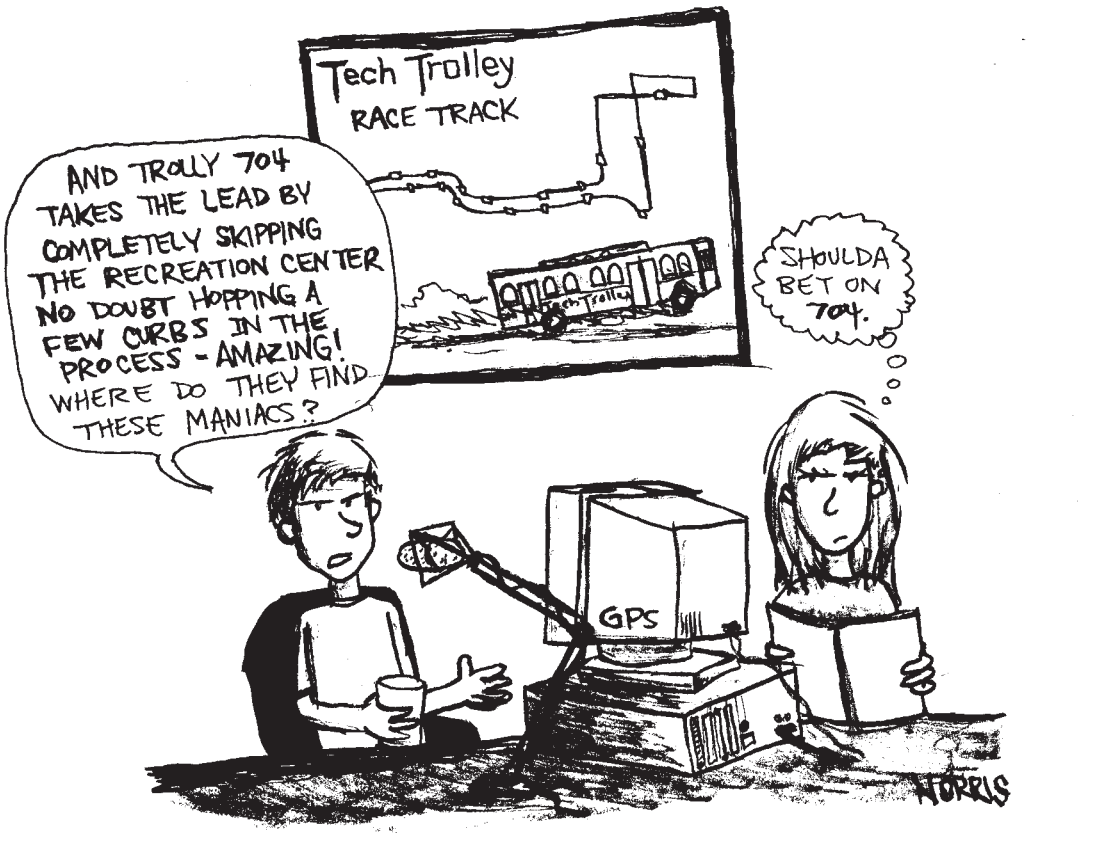
The main reason that the GPS idea is currently ineffective is because none of the trolley stops are right outside of dorms, a likely location students would want to utilize the technology. If a student has to factor in three to five minutes of walking time to the trolley stop, given the precision of the GPS tracking times, most students will find the system ineffective. Even worse, it is unlikely that a student would whip open their laptop just before the end of class (assuming their class is held in a wireless-capable building, something that is still an unfortunate rarity on this campus) to check when the next trolley would be arriving to cart them off to the opposite end of campus.

Aside from the fact that the online tracking system is unrealistic for practical student use, it also seems like a costly way to accomplish the relatively simple goal of informing trolley riders of the next arrival of a vehicle. An idea that is currently being discussed for implementation in the near future is to install (attractive, meaning theft-prone) liquid crystal display (LCD) screens at trolley stops. While this would overcome the problem of accessing the tracking website on the go, an uncomplicated, simple digital display with the time remaining until arrival of the next trolley could be used instead.

Granted, other ancillary benefits from the GPS system could be obtained, including logging how long it takes drivers to complete their loop, how long it takes to refill the vehicles with natural gas and the time drivers take for breaks sitting on the side of the road. Additionally, it would be faster in the cases of emergencies (since the GPS trackers are tapped into the public safety system), more productive to tally ridership with an electronic system (as opposed to the pen-and-clipboard method that is currently used) and could reduce operation costs because of increased efficiency.

In order to make this technology a worthwhile addition to the wealth of gadgets currently used on campus, the above issues must be addressed, and the system should also be expanded for use on the Stinger buses.

Consensus editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique*, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.*



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Identifying with a class proves tricky

"Even now, I will always feel a slightly closer bond to people I know who came to Tech the same year as me."

Jennifer Lee
Focus Editor

As a PL, one of the very first activities that we're encouraged to take our residents to is Freshman Convocation. One of the most compelling reasons I always give my freshmen to persuade them to go to Convocation (aside from the fact that you get to see Wayne Clough!), is that it's the only time you'll be with all your classmates, ever.

I was reminded of this as I observed the success of Juniors at Junior's last Thursday, an event sponsored by the Junior Class Committee that offered free or discounted Junior's chicken baskets (mmm) to the first 200 people that showed up. When I got to Junior's a little after 7, the free food was long gone, but most of the people were still there—and the place was packed. And while I was only seeing a small percentage of the 2,000-something students in my incoming class, it was probably the most I had seen in one place since Freshman Convocation.

Juniors at Junior's is part of a recent initiative to promote a sense of "class identity" among the campus community. But at a time when improving student life is the hot thing and new student organizations are popping up all the time, do we really need more class identity? It's easy to be dismissive or suspicious of the newly-formed Sophomore and Junior Committees, especially when the initiative began with the ideas of a small group of people and is being spearheaded by your usual campus leaders. Can these committees really speak for the needs of the majority of the Tech population?

In the first place, the bond of class is a somewhat superficial one. Ideally, there should be more meaningful things to define your "identity" at Tech by than your year—for example, your interests. It's a lot more important to feel like you're a member of a club you're passionate about than a member of your class, 80 percent of whom you have never met before. Despite the common stereotype of Tech students who sit in their rooms doing nothing, I would say that at least 80 percent of students are involved in *something* that they enjoy and can identify with at Tech.

Major is another important identification which also often serves to divide members of an incoming class early on. After freshman year core curriculum, you don't have the opportunity to be in classes with anyone outside of your major; also, as you get further in your studies, your major (i.e. the people that can help you with that tough circuits homework) becomes more important.

Then there's the persistent problem of how to define your class. This is especially relevant at Tech, where a student's undergraduate career can stretch into five or even six years and there's a large discrepancy between a student's year and credit hours.

But—and here's the important part—that's not to say that the idea isn't a worthwhile one. Even now, I will always feel a slightly closer bond to people I know who came to Tech the same year as me, at the very least because I know they've been through three years of Tech while the girl sitting next to me in my 2000-level class has only had to suffer through two.

And there are always a few issues that are invariably class-specific. Freshmen, of course, have to deal with being freshmen. I definitely went through the so-called sophomore slump, where all my friends and I seemed to be questioning our majors and future plans. And I'm sure next year, as a senior, I'll feel closer to anyone I know that is going through the gauntlet of interviewing for a job or applying to grad school (I haven't decided on which yet).

That's why I think the Junior Committee took the right approach with last week's Juniors at Junior's event. At a school where the student body is busy and diverse, the event was well-timed, occurring the first week of the semester before students got too overwhelmed with work, and well-executed. And, most importantly, it was non-committal, just inviting juniors to come out and commune for a brief hour or so on a school night.

So while the issue of class identity may be difficult for most people to get really excited about, the effort to plan more class-targeted events should be applauded. But as organizations like Junior and Sophomore Committee grow and become more solid and permanent, they need to remember for whom and why they're planning. They need to keep in mind that class identity isn't meant to be the "next big thing" to emphasize on campus. Instead, it should be something that you're reminded of occasionally, just to make you thankful that at least some of the people that you saw at Freshman Convocation are still here and still chugging along at Tech, just like you.

Now's the time to support Jacket hoopsters

"With all the good going for the team, you'd think the entire school would go basketball crazy."

Jennifer Schur
Opinions Editor

I am a stereotypical member of the female gender about certain things in life, including the entire arena of popular sports like football and basketball. I'm what sports fanatics would call a "fair-weather fan," supporting the team through the good times and not really caring when the scoreboard is more heavily weighted in the loss column. I'm a big Marlins fan, for example, (and have been since way back when in October of 2003), since I am from South Florida and all. But Coach Paul Hewitt's Georgia Tech basketball program has managed to change my outlook these past two seasons.

With a 12-0 start to the season, making it one of the best in two decades, Tech students (including myself) were pumped, with visions of their Jackets battling to victory in the Final Four dancing in their eyes. A sad two weeks ago, though, the dream started to show some weaknesses when the Georgia Bulldogs beat the Ramblin' Wreck with a heartbreaking score of 83-80 in double overtime. Since I'm no basketball expert by any means, I'm not going to even try to make up for the loss in my mind with notions of bad officiating. Instead, at the end of the game I realized that even with this loss, my fervor for supporting my team was stronger than ever.

This loyalty to the team is no doubt partially due to being part of the Tech community, but is also heavily due to the admirable job done by the newly-created First and Ten program, the Swarm and the engaging personalities of the team's players.

First and Ten has made great efforts to support the basketball team by supporting the basketball team's fans, through sponsorship of the basketball Swarm, which is run by the Ramblin' Reck Club (RRC) and other events. Hewitt has also done his part in giving back to the fans with special programs like the Greek Challenge and appearing at Thursday's pep rally at the campanile, which was also successful in part due to the RRC.

One of the best parts of being in the Swarm, sitting on the risers on the court, is the proximity to the players and refs; you get the feeling that you have this incredible influence on the outcome of the game. The camaraderie created by slinging insults at the opposing team and feeling the sweat fly off of players is what really makes the game.

The personality of the players seen on the court and the excitement of the fast-moving game they play completes the picture of understanding the popularity of Tech basketball this season. I guess their win-loss record might help, too.

With all the good things going for the team, you'd think the entire school would be going basketball crazy. Sure, Alexander Memorial Coliseum has sold out for almost every home game this season, but as a witness to all those games, I can attest to the fact that all the seats were not ever full. This school's bias towards football, a program that has not been ranked in the top 25 since my freshman year (and, if I remember correctly, we weren't ranked for very long. Does the name Tony Hollings and the acronym ACL strike a bell?), boggles my mind. Granted, football is a much bigger, more popular and historic college sport in the south, even for schools in conferences traditionally known for strong basketball like the ACC (as demonstrated the ACC's recent expansion that was motivated mostly by football), but when another sport's team is winning, students and alumni should rally around that success.

I'm sorry to say to Tech's generous donors that your money in the form of bought (an not used) tickets isn't always good enough—sometimes a warm body filling a seat and filling the air with your voices is just as important. I can remember embarrassing home basketball games last season when there where as many fans from UGA as those who showed up to represent the Yellow Jackets.

If Institute students manage to support the football team through seasons that end at 7-6, then certainly they should be able to make time to represent for the 12-2 Jacket cagers whose play harkens back to Cremins's days when the coliseum earned its name of the "Thrillerdome."

With the two latest games resulting in tough losses away, now is the time for the student body to pull together behind our Yellow Jackets, to show the rest of the college-sports world that we aren't the sort of fair-weather fans that I used to be.

OUR VIEWS Hot or Not

HOT-or-NOT

Sexified Stud. Center

The Student Center was filled with a sexy atmosphere this week, what with the recent renovations to the post office and the main stairs' handrails. The fresh, hip tiling on the post office floor is a definite improvement over bare concrete (and the refreshing smell of a just-finished construction project was an added bonus). The stairs' presumably natural wood handrailings also class the place up quite nicely.

Coke's talking

Just when you thought some things were still sacred in life, like a cold refreshing can of Coke straight from a vending machine, the world has been upended. Now your formerly-friendly Coke machine yaps (loudly) away from its sedentary and secure position against the wall. It's kind of cool that you can download mp3s from a Coke machine (and not dorky at all), but the random yelling has just got to go.

B-ball pep rally

How great it is to see the word "pep" associated with something going on at Tech, normally known as an abyss of apathy. The orchestrating of Thursday's pep rally in support of Yellow Jacket basketball must be applauded, as should Hewitt's participation. These sorts of unifying events should occur more often.

More construction

Not that disruptive construction is anything new to this campus, but with the work being done on Cherry St., it has been taken to a new level. This time, the repairs are taking place in the heart of campus, disrupting classes in nearby buildings with loud noise and making one of the prettiest parts of campus pretty ugly.

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

Footnotes needed for dating

By Jen Wlach
The Chronicle

(U-WIRE) Duke University—Perhaps it was the three research papers I had due during finals week, but leaving Charlie's one night my academic and social lives intertwined into a small epiphany. Walking back to Erwin, a girlfriend and I were discussing the frustration of meeting great guys who you can't entertain ideas of involvement with for one reason or another. Sober as a nun and exhausted from what seemed an endless amount of work, I came to this conclusion:

"It's like every good guy I meet has an asterisk next to his name, you know, like Roger Maris and the home run record. Each guy comes with these footnotes. It's asterisk: I live in DC, or asterisk: I have a girlfriend. Why can't I find someone without footnotes? I need a primary source!"

When I got home, I started to think about the whole idea of personal footnotes. Each of us possesses something that eligible suitors would want to know. What would it be like to have these items on display? Are the quirks, hang-ups, vices and traits something that change based on the guy or girl who shows interest? And more importantly, would being able to see one's footnotes change how we choose to invest our emotions?

The trouble with personal footnotes is that they're dangerous in both quality and quantity. For some people, there would only be one footnote. But when that footnote is something like "I have a venereal disease so rare the cure lies undiscovered in the Amazon," it's more than enough to scare off an interested girl.

On the other hand, some peo-

*See **Footnotes**, page 8*

Letter Submission Policy

The *Technique* welcomes all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, emailed to **editor@technique.gatech.edu** or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Tony Kluemper, Editor-in-Chief.

All letters must be signed and must include a campus box number or other valid mailing address for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 400 words and should be submitted by 8 a.m. Wednesday in order to be printed in the following Friday's issue. Any letters not meeting these criteria or not considered by the Editorial Board of the *Technique* to be of valid intent will not be printed. Editors reserves the right to edit for style, content, and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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Coverage Requests

Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the editor-in-chief or to individual section editors. For more information, visit **http://nique.net/stuorgguide.pdf**.

BUZZ

Around the Campus

What do you think about the new trolley GPS system?

Kevin Parkoo
EE Junior

"I think it's really useful for people who have laptops out an about."

Marcus Cylar
EE

"I got the email, but I didn't open the link."

Gini Singh
ISyE Sophomore

"I like it but it's only for the few people who need to go to Tech Square."

Eghosa Oyegun
ChE Sophomore

"It would probably save people a lot of time.

Photos by Jamie Howell

A global trek with view from Tech

In this post-9/11 election year, it's a debate of "daddy" issues

Every four years America airs its dirty laundry, browses for duds and collectively decides if it needs a new suit—or at least if it wants a new suit to look at. That's right, it's the time every few years where places like Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina flex their political muscles for the country. It's time for a presidential election. As more and more Americans realize the calendar has turned to 2004, some of them, though still a distinct minority, will also begin to realize that an election occurs this year.

America's first presidential test takes place Monday, and I remain unconvinced that most Tech students can name more than one of the nine democrats competing for the right to run against, and probably lose to, George W. Bush. (And they'd probably only be able name Dick Gephardt since this year marks the 32nd time he runs for office.) A quick update for those who have not given the campaign much attention: former Vermont Governor Howard Dean emerged as the frontrunner due to his strong criticism of the war in Iraq and a fundraising effort that made never-before-seen use of the internet.

Since then the other candidates have tried to paint him as a left-of-center, angry governor with loose lips not fit to be president, while moderate democrats seek the heir to the Clinton legacy (the booming economy part—not the Monica part). Meanwhile Bush and Cheney raise record amounts of funds they'll use to inundate Americans with their message in the general election portion of the program.

As a self-admitted political junkie, this election strikes me differently than the other two that I can recall well. In 2000 Americans argued over surpluses and social security and the economy and education. The big policy issues were immigration and trade, and Bush lauded Mexico as our country's most important partner.

JODY SHAW
COLUMNIST

This election, however, even members of the Democratic Party argue over their foreign policy credentials, their contingency plans for Iraq and whether or not they are capacitated to head the most powerful armed forces in the world. At one time, the Democratic Party was referred to as the "mommy party" of economics and education in contrast to the Grand Old Party's handling of "daddy" issues like defense. In the post-September 11 world, everyone tries to handle these "daddy" issues.

The tragic events of that day continue to cast their shadow on America in innumerable ways, but the best way in which we can see its presence is through the character of this election, and the way in which the debate has changed. This election will be one of orange alerts and weapons of mass destruction. Of airport security measures and the axis of evil. Of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Iran, North Korea and so on. It is one in which Democrats may anoint a retired NATO General, and self-admitted former Republican, with no political experience as their savior and still lose a foreign policy debate to the incumbent President. Such is the nature of this contest, in which the images of terror still remain so lucid in the public memory.

For how long will this phenomenon continue? While the events can never be, and should never be, removed from the public memory, how long will they remain part of the daily consciousness of the public? Have we seen a fundamental shift in the political view of a generation, maybe even a nation, in which international affairs are more important? Or is it a temporary reaction to fear and insecurity?

As university students at an institute whose goal is to shape the future, the decision will ultimately be ours. We will determine the public memory, and, in at least one way, we already are. Michael Arad, an alumnus of the College of Architecture, recently won the competition for the right to design the memorial at New York's World Trade Center. "I hope that I will be able to honor the memory of all those who perished and create a place where we may all grieve and find meaning," Arad said in regards to his plans.

Though each of us must conduct our own personal grieving and find personal meaning, the meaning of the event will be determined by all of us—those of us who remember where we were on campus the day the towers fell, the Institute closed and America changed.

I hope the reflections of September 11 seen in this year's election are true images of an America, especially a young America, more interested in the world around it, and more ready to engage that world, usually peacefully, but when necessary aggressively, to shape the future. If the changes are, however, of the reactionary sort based on fear and insecurity, we've missed the greater meaning.

Footnotes from page 7

ple's footnotes would read like those e-reserves you pray for—you know, the ones where half of the reading consists of footnotes alone. When a cute girl comes with a walk-in closet's worth of skeletons, you choose to leave her on the single shelf.

My cynical, New York sarcastic side automatically saw the bad footnotes. Clearly a person would want to see things like "I cheat on every person I'm committed to," and "I can't be alone so I date anything that comes along ... including you."

Then I thought about the people who you would normally discount but who are the ones you should be spending time with. Like the girl whose footnote reads, "I'm totally not your type but will make you really happy," or the guy's that says, "You discount me as intimidating, but there's other aspects of me worth looking into."

It's when we choose not to pursue someone based on footnotes that things get dangerous. Playing it rational about emotions—a totally irrational thing—lies right in the center of the head vs. heart conflict.

So now I realize that footnotes are great for papers, but when it comes to personal life it's better to make the discovery for yourself. Getting involved with the wrong types is what refines our tastes. It's part of the potholed road we travel in finding future mates. And what about my search for a primary source guy? I realized a person without footnotes would be a painfully normal person who's as interesting as white toast.